

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 39

December 2, 2005

SUBJECT: MANUALLY COCKING AND FIRING OF A DOUBLE ACTION SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL - REVISED

PURPOSE: The discharge of a firearm is in all probability the most serious act in which a law enforcement officer will engage and has far-reaching consequences for all of the parties involved. It is imperative that when an officer is involved in a shooting, he/she acts within the boundaries of Department policy and legal guidelines, and utilizes sound judgement. This is especially true when the involved officer is faced with a situation requiring that a precision shot be taken to stop an immediate deadly threat. Such incidents include, but are not limited to; hostage situations, confrontations with a homicide bomber, suspects wearing body armor, and situations that require a shot be fired from a significant distance.

The Department recognizes the critical importance of firearm accuracy and as a result has recently approved the use of Glock semi-automatic pistols that require the same amount of trigger pressure for all shots fired. However, some Department authorized semi-automatic pistols currently in use require that the first shot be fired in double-action mode where the trigger pressure is higher than subsequent shots taken in single-action mode. This may make precision shot placement under certain circumstances more difficult and reduce firearm accuracy.

This Order revises the Department procedure for manually cocking a double-action semi-automatic pistol by allowing officers to manually "thumb-cock" any double-action semi-automatic pistol or Department authorized weapon to single-action prior to taking a precision shot.

PROCEDURE: Unless conditions warrant, officers should not manually thumb-cock their double-action semi-automatic pistol or Department authorized weapon to single-action prior to shooting. However, when an officer is confronted with an immediate defense of life (IDOL) situation where the use of lethal force is reasonable and the officer intends to shoot, and precision shot placement is necessary to immediately stop a deadly threat in the safest manner possible for all involved parties, the involved officer may manually thumb-cock his/her semi-automatic pistol to single-action prior to taking the first shot.

Note: Officers are reminded to keep their trigger finger along the frame of the firearm when performing a manual thumb-cock or when de-cocking the firearm. Officers shall not place their finger on the trigger of the firearm until their sights are aligned on the target and they intend to shoot.

Officers manually thumb-cocking a firearm to single-action shall consider the extent of the threat being faced and the requisite need for a precision shot. In addition, officers shall consider their marksmanship abilities, the movement of the target, and the likelihood of successfully ending the threat prior to firing the weapon.

Note: When the involved officer has determined that the immediate necessity to fire no longer exists, he/she should immediately de-cock the semi-automatic pistol from a single-action to a double-action trigger press.

This Order does not revise the Department's Use of Deadly Force policy. Officer's actions when faced with a Use of Deadly Force situation shall be guided by Department Manual Section 1/556.40.

AMENDMENTS: This Order amends Section 3/610.25 of the Department Manual.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: The Commanding Officer, Professional Standards Bureau, shall monitor compliance with this directive in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

WILLIAM J. BRATTON
Chief of Police

DISTRIBUTION "A"